**STORM ON THE ISLAND**

We are prepared: we build our houses squat,

Sink walls in rock and roof them with good slate.

This wizened earth has never troubled us

With hay, so, as you see, there are no stacks

Or stooks that can be lost. Nor are there trees

Which might prove company when it blows full

Blast: you know what I mean - leaves and branches

Can raise a tragic chorus in a gale

So that you listen to the thing you fear

Forgetting that it pummels your house too.

But there are no trees, no natural shelter.

You might think that the sea is company,

Exploding comfortably down on the cliffs

But no: when it begins, the flung spray hits

The very windows, spits like a tame cat

Turned savage. We just sit tight while wind dives

And strafes invisibly. Space is a salvo,

We are bombarded with the empty air.

Strange, it is a huge nothing that we fear.

Seamus Heaney